

We all ~~for those~~  
who choose to ignore  
Montana's  
Seatbelt Law

**I**gnoring our state seatbelt law costs Montanans over \$36 million a year. Sure, we all know not wearing your seatbelt can kill you. But have you ever thought about if you are involved in a crash and didn't die?

Medical costs, emergency medical services, vocational rehabilitation, market productivity, household productivity, insurance administration, workplace costs, legal/court costs all add up to a tremendous economic loss. A loss that is felt not only by you, but all Montana citizens - just from not wearing your seatbelt.

To make matters worse, the economic impact of unbelted motor vehicle occupants is far greater than the estimated health care costs. Many individuals will never return back to their pre-crash levels of productivity. Nationally, \$5.20 in productivity is lost for every \$1 in health care costs for motor vehicle crash patients. This data suggests an additional \$578 million in productivity losses in Montana annually which are preventable through an increase in seatbelt use.\*

## KNOW THE FACTS

- ✓ Montana spends **\$36.7 million** each year on direct health care costs for unbelted patients.
- ✓ Unbelted occupants are also more likely to require hospitalization following a crash, with an average cost of **\$52,993**.
- ✓ The average unbelted occupant has a longer hospital stay, requires more intensive care and has hospital charges **\$16,573** higher than a belted occupant who is hospitalized.
- ✓ Uninsured and Medicaid-covered unbelted occupants cost the state of Montana over **\$14 million** annually for hospital care of their preventable injuries.
- ✓ Passage of a primary enforcement seatbelt law would bring an **additional \$4.8 million** in federal funds for highways and jobs in Montana.

EXHIBIT

1 27 09

SD 237 #

\* Provided by Harborview Injury Prevention & Research Center-2008,  
Dr. Beth Ebel, Principal Investigator

## The Last Best Place?

Montana is the only state where child restraint laws are secondary. The ONLY state.

In 2003 – 2004, records of 37 children, ages 0-17, who died in a motor vehicle crash as either a driver or passenger were reviewed to determine whether the deaths could have been prevented. 32 (86%) were identified as preventable deaths; of those, 25 did not use a seat belt or child safety seat or used them incorrectly.\*

Parents rely on the law to guide them in their choice of child restraint.

What's more, children model adult behavior. Therefore, adults who don't buckle up are sending children a deadly message that it is all right not to wear a seatbelt. Research shows that if a driver is unbuckled, 70 percent\*\* of the time children riding in that vehicle won't be buckled either.

## Enforcement of Child Occupant Protection Law



■ Primary Enforcement

■ Secondary Enforcement

\*2006 MT Fetal, Infant, Child Mortality Review (FICMR)  
\*\* National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)



Two young men were ejected and killed while traveling in this vehicle. Both were not wearing their seatbelt. Clearly, if they were restrained and remained in the vehicle, they would be alive today.

## Room to Live

As illustrated in this picture, even if there is minor damage to the vehicle, unbuckled occupants' chance of surviving a crash diminishes drastically. Single vehicle, run-off-the-road crashes cause over 60 percent^ of the fatalities in Montana - most due to ejection from the vehicle.

Vehicles are built with a reinforced safety cage to protect occupants in a crash. Within that cage is your best chance to survive - because there is "room to live" if you stay in the vehicle properly buckled up.

From 2004 through 2006, 613 drivers and passengers were killed on Montana roadways. Of those people killed, 71% ^^ were not wearing their seatbelts, meaning over 400 people would have had "room to live" if they had only buckled up.

^"Room to Live," Montana Department of Transportation (MDT)  
^^Traffic Safety Problem Identification, FFY 2009, MDT

## Montana Seatbelt Coalition

The Montana Seatbelt Coalition promotes the adoption of primary occupant protection laws in Montana. Our membership includes interested businesses, individuals, government agencies, legislators and community coalitions representing all geographic regions of the state.

If you are interested in joining this cause and helping to protect Montanans' pocket books, visit...

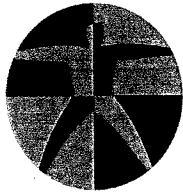
[www.seatbeltmontana.com](http://www.seatbeltmontana.com)

## WE HAVE

Secondary Enforcement Seatbelt Laws that allow law enforcement to cite offenders only after they have been stopped for some other traffic violation.

## WE NEED

Primary Enforcement Seatbelt Laws that allow law enforcement to stop and ticket a driver for not wearing a seatbelt, just like any other routine violation.



HARBORVIEW  
INJURY PREVENTION  
& RESEARCH CENTER

## Seat Belt Use and Health Care Costs in Montana

Beth E. Ebel, MD, MSc, MPH  
Sravanthi Parasa, MBBS  
Christopher Mack, MS  
Harborview Injury Prevention & Research Center

December 19, 2008

- Each year in Montana, an estimated **887 unbelted** individuals are hospitalized for care. An estimated **819** admissions might have been prevented if a seat belt had been used.
- Caring for these unbelted Montana patients costs over **\$36.7 million each year in direct inpatient health care costs**, which could have been prevented through seat belt use. These costs result from three sources:
  - (1) More hospital admissions: **819 individuals** requiring hospital care for preventable injury.
  - (2) Higher costs per hospital stay: On average, an unbelted occupant had a longer hospital stay (**2.3 days longer**), required more intensive care (**2.7 days longer**) and accrued significantly higher hospital charges of **\$52,993** relative to the average belted occupant **\$36,420**.
  - (3) Costs for emergency care: **Unbelted drivers and passengers use an estimated \$9.9 million** in preventable emergency visits each year.
- Uninsured or Medicaid covered unbelted occupants **cost the state of Montana over \$14 million annually for their hospital care of their preventable injuries**.
- The excess health care costs for injured unbelted occupants mean that **each driver in Montana pays an extra \$51** to subsidize unbelted occupants.
- Among Montana crash occupants who required hospital admission following a motor vehicle crash, **58% were not belted, and 42% were belted**.
- Unbelted occupants are significantly more likely to have their hospital costs paid from federal or state sources.

- Over one-third (36%) of unrestrained occupants have no insurance. Their hospital costs ultimately paid for by the state of Montana.

**Table 1: Excess hospital costs and emergency care costs for unbelted motor vehicle occupants in Montana, 2006.**

<b>Costs for Unbelted Occupants</b>	
Hospital costs	\$ 26,747,024
Emergency care costs	\$ 9,921,516
Total health care costs	\$ 36,668,540

\* Hospital costs estimated for unbelted occupants requiring inpatient care in Montana. Hospital cost includes cost-to-charge reimbursement and provider fees.

**Table 2: Seat Belt Use, hospital charges, average length of stay, and primary payer for hospitalized motor vehicle occupants admitted for care at Montana trauma centers\* or transferred to a Level I Trauma Center, 2006.**

	<b>Not belted (n = 2663)</b>	<b>Belted (n = 1901)</b>	<b>Difference between unbelted and belted patients</b>
Seat Belt Use (%)	58.4%	41.7%	
Average hospital charge (\$ 2005)	\$52,993	\$36,420	\$16,573
Average length of hospital stay (days)	8.0 days	5.7 days	2.3 days
Average length of intensive care unit stay (days)	6.2 days	3.5 days	2.7 days
<b>Insurance Status</b>			
Privately insured	40.4%	55.5%	
Medicare	16.1%	11.8%	
Medicaid	7.3%	7.0%	
Self-Pay or uninsured	36.1%	25.7%	

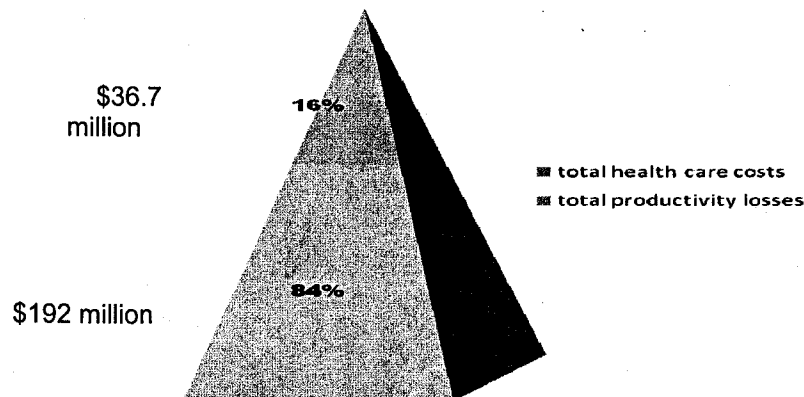
\* Data from Montana level II trauma centers from 2006. Annualized data from Level I trauma center 2005-march 2008. Total admission numbers estimated based on MT trauma center data and police reported injury.

- **Unrestrained** occupants are **23 times more likely to die** following a crash (3.3% vs. 0.14%).
- From 2004 through 2006 there were **613 deaths** among motor vehicle occupants, of whom **432 (71%) were unrestrained**.

	Not belted	Belted	Unknown Belt Use	Total Montana Occupant Fatalities
2004	135	48	8	191
2005	148	50	5	203
2006	149	64	6	219
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>432</b> <b>(71%)</b>	<b>162</b> <b>(26%)</b>	<b>19</b> <b>(3%)</b>	<b>613</b>

Source: Fatal Accident Reporting System, 2004-2006.

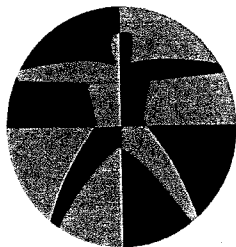
Figure 1: Lifetime costs of unbelted motor vehicle crash injuries in Montana



\*Total health care costs include costs of – hospitalized patients, nonhospitalized occupants, rehabilitation and skilled nursing facility. Hence the total health care costs represented in the diagram below is a gross underestimate of the total health care costs we included only the cost of ED visits and the hospitalized patients.

- An increase from 80% to 90% seat belt use will save Montanans an estimated \$18.7 million in health care costs. Montana state government is predicted to save an estimated \$7.2 million in health care costs alone.

	<b>Current seat belt usage rate</b>	<b>Projected rate 1</b>	<b>Projected rate 2</b>	<b>Projected rate 3</b>	<b>100% belt use</b>
	<b>80%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total costs saved</b>		\$ 9,706,378	\$ 18,693,766	\$ 27,681,153	\$36,668,540
<b>Costs saved by state budget</b>		\$ 3,717,518	\$ 7,159,665	\$ 10,601,811	\$14,043,958



# HARBORVIEW INJURY PREVENTION & RESEARCH CENTER

## NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release:**  
November 20, 2008

**Contact:** Kellie Tormey  
Name: (206) 744-9430

### **Ignoring State Seat Belt Law Costs Montanans \$36 million in Health Care Costs**

*Unbelted occupants much more likely to sustain an injury in a crash;  
health care costs exceed \$36 million each year*

**SEATTLE, November 30, 2008**—Occupants who choose not to wear a seat belt are much more likely to be injured in a motor vehicle crash, and the health care costs of injury have a significant economic impact on both the state of Montana and its residents, according to a new study conducted by the Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center in Seattle. Researchers looked at crash data involving belted and unbelted passengers in Montana from 2004 to 2006.

Among the study's key findings are that an average of 887 unbelted individuals are hospitalized each year for care following a motor vehicle crash. Of these, 819 (92%) sustained a more serious injury because they were not using a seat belt. Researchers found that among the 613 individuals killed on Montana roads during the three-year period, 71% were unrestrained.

The economic impact of injuries sustained by unbelted passengers was substantial. The cost of providing health care to unbelted Montana patients involved in a crash exceeds \$36 million each year—costs that could be prevented through seat belt use. Because many unbelted patients are uninsured or have Medicaid insurance, researchers also noted that the state of Montana pays over \$14 million annually for the hospital care of unbelted patients who sustained an injury. Each year, every driver in Montana pays an extra \$51 in taxes and insurance premiums to pay for the health care costs of injured, unbelted occupants.

On average, an unbelted occupant had a longer hospital stay (2.3 days longer), required more intensive care (2.7 days longer) and also accrued significantly higher hospital charges (\$52,993) relative to belted occupants who were hospitalized (\$36,420).

“Montanans who don't wear seat belts are much more likely to hurt themselves, but the bill for their injuries are largely paid by others, using up state tax revenue and resulting in

higher insurance premiums,” said Dr. Beth Ebel, director of the Harborview Injury Prevention & Research Center. “Given our tough economic times, it is time to consider measures to increase seat belt use, such as primary enforcement seat belt legislation, which would result in significant cost savings and also save lives”.

The study on health care costs for unbuckled motor vehicle occupants was funded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The Harborview Injury Prevention & Research Center is one of the nation’s leading institutions dedicated to injury prevention and trauma research. The Center is affiliated with the University of Washington, and Harborview Medical Center, the designated Level 1 trauma center for the states of Washington, Montana, Idaho and Alaska.

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*(Editor’s note: For media interested in contacting Dr. Beth Ebel, principal investigator, please call 206-744-9430, or email [ktormey@u.washington.edu](mailto:ktormey@u.washington.edu).)*



# MONTANA

## Safety Belt Information

### Fast Facts

- The Montana legislature enacted a law mandating safety belt use in 1987.
- However, that law contains a *secondary enforcement provision*, meaning that a law enforcement officer may only cite a driver for violating the belt law after having stopped the person for some other offense, such as expired license tags.
- The restraint codes (MCA § 61-13-103 and 61-9-420) are the *only* traffic codes with secondary enforcement. Officers may enforce all other traffic offenses as primary offenses.
- Observed safety belt usage in Montana (June 2008) was **79.3%**.
- During 2007, **217 vehicle occupants** (doesn't include bicyclists,

50% were ejected from the vehicle

motorcyclists and pedestrians) **died** in motor vehicle crashes alone.

- Most of those (74%) were *not* wearing safety belts.
- The primary purpose of a safety belt is to keep a person *in a vehicle*. The risk of a fatal injury is many times higher if ejected than if not ejected.

3 out of 4 people who died in a crash were not buckled

A person may be thrown up to 100 feet from the vehicle, and dies either from the blunt trauma of impacting the ground or other immovable object such as a tree, or the force of the vehicle rolling over the person's body, or both.

- Of the 217 occupant fatalities during 2007, 105 were either totally or partially ejected (approx. 50%).

### Would primary enforcement of the belt law *really* make a difference?

- States with primary enforcement of safety belt laws have seen an increase in observed usage by 7 to 14%. (source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)
- With a belt usage rate between 87 and 94% in Montana, it's estimated that at least **20 to 30 lives would be saved per year**.
- With a belt usage rate of 100%, as many as **75 lives** would be saved per year.
- An effective safety belt enforcement program saves lives, reduces injury, saves tax payers money, and often leads to the apprehension and conviction of more serious violators.

Increased safety belt use = fewer injuries and deaths

## Economic impacts

- Economic loss due to traffic crashes increased during 2007 to \$662,000,000.

This includes uncompensated insurance costs and hospital bills.

- That is an average of over \$690 for every citizen in Montana, or \$2,760 for a family of four. (source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)
- 61% of all spinal cord injuries and 57% of traumatic brain injuries in Montana resulted from motor vehicle crashes in which the occupants were unbuckled.

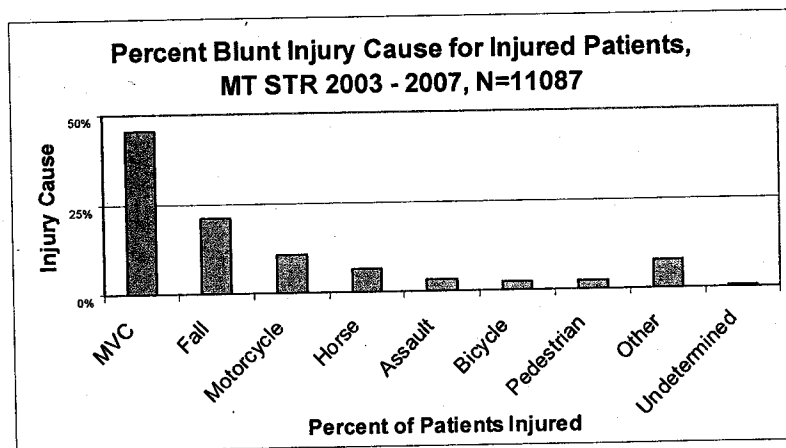
(source: Montana Trauma Registry 2005 data)

- Average hospital charge for someone injured in a vehicle crash, buckled versus unbuckled:

buckled	not buckled
\$20,709	\$48,692

2005 data from two Billings hospitals

- During the same year, these two Billings hospitals also **provided \$2.2 million in uncompensated care** to motor vehicle crash victims.



Montana Trauma Registry (2003 - 2007 data)

By far, the leading cause of accidental injury in Montana is **motor vehicle crashes (MVC)**. Many of the injuries and deaths would have been prevented by proper seatbelt use.

## Belt usage by vehicle type

- Safety belt usage is much lower in pick-up trucks: about 63%.
- Over 83% of people killed in pick-up truck crashes were *not* buckled.
- Pick-ups and SUVs have a higher incidence of rollovers, where the possibility of being ejected increases.

## Citations

- Over 13,500 convictions resulted from seat belt citations issued during 2006.
- During 2005, there were 14,200 convictions for safety belt violations.

## Belts vs. alcohol

- In 2007, most of the individuals (85%) killed involved in an alcohol-related crash were not buckled.

# Myths and **FACTS** about safety belt usage

**MYTH: Belts are uncomfortable or inconvenient.**

**FACT:** Initially people may find safety belts uncomfortable, confining or inconvenient simply because they're not used to wearing them. Those people who have made wearing safety belts a habit can testify that once their use does become a habit, there is no discomfort or inconvenience. It can't be overemphasized that the serious discomfort and inconvenience of motor vehicle crash injury in no way compares to the imaginary discomfort or the inconvenience you may think you feel wearing a belt the first few times.

**MYTH: The belts in my car don't work.**

**FACT:** It's important that everyone realizes that newer shoulder belts are made so that you can move comfortably but they will still lock up in sudden stops or crashes. Many people mistake this freedom of movement as a broken mechanism. Newer shoulder belts are designed to lock up only when the car changes speed or direction suddenly, not when the occupant changes position.

**MYTH: Drivers in air bag-equipped vehicles don't need to wear safety belts.**

**FACT:** Air bags provide supplemental protection in frontal crashes, but motorists can slide under them if they are not wearing a seat belt. In addition, air bags will not help in a side or rear impact or rollover crash. Motorists should wear a seat belt for protection in all types of crashes.

**MYTH: I don't want to be trapped in a fire or underwater.**

**FACT:** Crashes involving fire or water happen in only 1/2 of one percent of all crashes. So it doesn't happen often. However, when they do occur the best chance of survival rests in remaining conscious, uninjured, and in full possession of your faculties. The greatest danger is with the impact that precedes the fire or submersion in water. If you're not using a safety belt, it's very likely that you will be knocked unconscious or severely injured. If you're belted, it's very likely you will be able to unbuckle yourself and get out of a potential fire or submerged car situation.

**MYTH: I'd rather be thrown clear in a crash.**

**FACT:** Being thrown safely clear in a crash is almost impossible. When you're thrown, you may be thrown through the windshield, scraped along the pavement, or even crushed by your own vehicle or another one. The idea of being thrown from a car and gently landing in a grassy area beside the road is pure fantasy. Your best bet

in a crash is to stay inside the vehicle, securely held by your safety belt.

**MYTH: Belts can hurt you in a crash.**

**FACT:** Properly worn safety belts seldom cause injuries. If they do, the injuries are usually surface bruises and are generally less severe than would have been the case without any belt. Without the belts, you could probably have been thrown out of the vehicle and been injured severely. It is true that sometimes the force of a crash is so great that nothing could have prevented injuries. Studies have consistently shown that injuries in most serious crashes would have been much more severe had safety belts not been worn.

**MYTH: I'm not going far and I won't be going fast.**

**FACT:** This is the comment that so many people living in rural areas use when asked why they do not wear a safety belt. It's important to remember that most crash deaths occur within 25 miles of home and at speeds of less than 40 miles per hour. This emphasizes that everyday driving from just one neighbor's home to another, to school, to the store or just one farm to another poses the greatest danger.

**MYTH: The chance that I'll have an accident is so small, those things only happen to other people.**

**FACT:** This is an attitude that is universal to everything we do. It's comfortable to think that accidents only happen to other people. However, one out of three people will be seriously injured in a car crash sometime during their lives. This is really a significant risk. We never know when it will occur or how it will occur. The answer -- buckle up every time on every trip.

**MYTH: I'm a good driver, it won't happen to me.**

**FACT:** You may be a good driver but you cannot always control the other drivers on the road. The statistics related to motor vehicle crashes and drunk drivers are devastating. Even if you are driving defensively, a drunk driver coming around the next curve may not be. Again, you never know what might happen. Play it safe. Buckle up every time -- every trip.

[http://www.michigan.gov/msp/0,1607,7-123-1589\\_1711\\_4587-13689--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/msp/0,1607,7-123-1589_1711_4587-13689--,00.html)

RiverStone Health  
123 South 27<sup>th</sup> Street  
Billings, MT 59101-4200



## Media Advisory

For immediate release  
December 9, 2008

For more information contact:  
Barbara Schneeman  
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### Montana Seatbelt Coalition – Press Conference

**WHO:** Montana Seatbelt Coalition

Steve Yeakel, Montana Council for Maternal Child Health  
Denice Harris, AAA Montana  
Representative Ken Peterson  
Senator Gary Branae

**WHAT:** Call attention to the need of a Primary Seatbelt Law

**WHEN:** 10:00 a.m., Thursday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008

**WHERE:** Whitewood Transportation, 2185 Goodman Road

**BILLINGS, MT** – Although observed safety belt usage in Montana nears 80 percent, if between 87 and 94 percent of Montanans used seatbelts, it is estimated that an additional 20-30 lives would be saved each year. That number increases to 75 additional lives if seatbelt usage were 100 percent. Its simple, increased seatbelt usage results in fewer injuries and deaths.

The Montana Seat Belt Coalition seeks to raise public awareness as to the social, medical and economic tolls of not using seatbelts. Speakers will share Montana specific seatbelt usage information, discuss the economic impacts of not using seatbelts as well as encourage the 2009 Montana legislature to pass a primary seatbelt law.

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#### About RiverStone Health

RiverStone Health is a major provider of personal and public health services in Yellowstone County and in south central Montana. We provide communities with Health, Education, Leadership and Protection (HELP). By connecting people to quality public and personal health services, RiverStone Health helps individuals and communities lead better lives. For more information, visit [www.riverstonehealth.org](http://www.riverstonehealth.org).

## PREVENTION OPPORTUNITIES UNDER THE BIG SKY

## MOST MONTANANS SUPPORT A PRIMARY SEAT BELT LAW

In 2005, Montana ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in the nation for the highest age-adjusted death rate for occupants in motor vehicle crashes (18.8 per 100,000), which is three times higher than the national motor vehicle death rate (6.4 per 100,000).<sup>1</sup> During this time period the motor vehicle crash death rates were higher for men (27.3 per 100,000) than for women (10.4 per 100,000), and American Indians (40.1 per 100,000) than for whites (17.2 per 100,000).<sup>1</sup> In 2007, there were 276 motor vehicle crash fatalities in Montana and many more serious injuries in motor vehicle crashes.<sup>2</sup> There are multiple factors that contribute to this extraordinary fatality rate among Montanans including a lack of seat belt use, high speed, and impaired and careless driving.<sup>2</sup> An effective strategy to reduce unnecessary motor vehicle-related injuries and deaths is to increase seat belt usage for motor vehicle occupants both by educating motor vehicle users and enforcing a primary seat belt law.<sup>3</sup> Twenty-seven states have enacted primary seat belt laws, which allow law enforcement officers to stop a vehicle when an occupant is not wearing a seat belt. Montana currently has a secondary law, which only allows law enforcement officers to stop a vehicle and educate and/or cite the occupant for not wearing a seat belt, after another traffic violation has occurred. This issue of *Montana Public Health* uses data from the Montana Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) to assess seat belt use and attitudes towards a primary seat belt law among adult Montanans.

**The BRFSS Survey** The BRFSS is a state-based random digit dial telephone survey of a sample of non-institutionalized adult Montanans.<sup>4</sup> Three-thousand one hundred and three Montanans were surveyed between January to June 2008. The response rate was 46%. Respondents were asked two questions: "How often do you use seat belts when you drive or ride in a car?," and "Currently Montana has a secondary seat belt law, which means law enforcement officers cannot stop vehicles because a driver or any passenger is unbelted – there must be another reason for the stop. A primary seat belt law allows officers to stop vehicles when they observe any unbelted driver or passenger in the vehicle. Do you support a primary seat belt law in Montana?" The proportions of respondents who reported always wearing a seat belt and supporting a primary seat belt law were calculated overall, and by selected demographic characteristics.

**Who Always Wears Their Seat Belts?** Seventy percent of respondents reported always wearing a seat belt when riding or driving in a vehicle. Women were more likely than men (78% vs. 61%) and persons aged 65 years and older (76%) were more likely than persons aged 45 to 64 years older (71%) and those aged 18 to 44 years old (66%) to report always wearing their seat belt. American Indians (74%) and whites (70%) reported similar use rates. Individuals with health insurance were more likely to report always wearing a seat belt compared to persons without health insurance (72% vs. 62%). There was no substantial difference in seat belt use by annual household income: <\$25,000 (68%), \$25,000-\$49,999 (68%), and >\$50,000 (73%), unknown (70%).

**Most Montanans support a primary seat belt law** Sixty-one percent of Montanans reported support of a primary seat belt law, 36% did not, and 4% were not sure. Women, older persons, American Indians, and adults with health insurance were more likely to support a primary seat belt law compared to men, younger persons, whites, and adults without health insurance (Table).

Table. Support for a primary seat belt law among adult Montanans, 2008.

<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Percent supporting law</u>
Total	61
Sex	
Men	51
Women	70
Age (years)	
18-44	59
45-64	58
65+	71
Race	
American Indian	78
White	60
Have health insurance	
Yes	63
No	51
Annual household income	
<\$25,000	61
\$25,000-\$49,999	59
>\$50,00	60
Unknown	64

**Prevention Steps** Always wearing a seat belt while riding or driving in a vehicle, even for short distances, can significantly reduce one's risk of injury, disability, or death.

Implementing and enforcing a primary seat belt law is a critical public health strategy to promote this life saving behavior.

Seat Belts  
**SAVE  
LIVES**

**Recommendation:** To reduce injuries and deaths associated with motor vehicle crashes.

- Enact and enforce a primary seat belt law.
- Always wear your seat belt and make sure others in your vehicle are properly restrained.
- Always drive sober.
- Eliminate distractions that lead to careless driving (e.g., cell phone use).
- Health care professionals should counsel patients to wear a seat belt while riding or driving in a motor vehicle and to drive sober.

For more information about this report and injury prevention in Montana, contact Bobbi Perkins, Injury Prevention Coordinator at (406) 444-4126 or email at [bperkins@mt.gov](mailto:bperkins@mt.gov).

**References:**

1. CDC. Injury Mortality Report, Wisqars 2005, <http://webappa.cdc.gov/cgi-bin/broker.exe>
2. MT DOT Highway Traffic Safety Problem Identification Report FFY 2009
3. Houston D, Richardson L. *Safety belt use and the switch to primary enforcement, 1991 – 2003*, Am J Public Health 2006;96:1949-1954
4. Montana DPHHS. BRFSS (<http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/brfss/html/brfss-index.shtml>)

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Story available at <http://www.billingsgazette.net/articles/2008/12/12/news/local/24-backers.txt>

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## Backers of seat belt bill optimistic

By DIANE COCHRAN  
Of The Gazette Staff

For Montana seat belt advocates, the fifth time could be the charm.

A bill that would enact a primary seat belt law will be considered for the fifth time by Montana lawmakers, who convene Jan. 5 in Helena for the 61st session of the state Legislature.

"I think we can get it through this time," Sen. Gary Branae, D-Billings, said Thursday during a press conference where he also talked about escaping with only a scratch after rolling his pickup truck on the interstate. Branae and his passenger, another lawmaker, were wearing seat belts.

"I will strongly encourage the governor to sign it," Branae said of the proposed bill.

A similar bill passed the Senate in 2007 but failed by 10 votes in the House of Representatives.

A primary seat belt law would give law enforcement officials the authority to stop vehicles carrying unbelted occupants. Under current state law, drivers or passengers can be cited for not wearing a seat belt only after a vehicle is stopped for another reason.

Research in other states has shown that seat belt use climbs after a primary law goes into effect. Eighty percent of Montanans already buckle up.

Montana is one of 23 states without a primary seat belt law and the only state that does not require infants and small children to be secured in child safety seats.

"We are really killing and injuring way too many people on our streets and highways in Montana," said Bette Hall-Munger, executive director of the state's Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition.

Hall-Munger spoke Thursday at a legislative breakfast at Billings Clinic that focused on children's health care.

Later in the morning, seat belt advocates gathered at the trucking firm Whitewood Transport to promote the passage of a seat belt law.

Montanans spend almost \$37 million annually on medical care for injuries suffered in unbelted vehicle crashes, according to a study by Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center in Seattle.

Some \$14 million of that is incurred by people with Medicaid or who do not have health insurance.

"It's no longer just about death or injury," said Denice Harris, manger of public affairs for AAA Mountain West. "It's also about the money. This is costing Montanans money."

"When people die in motor vehicle crashes is when they're cheap," Harris said. "When they don't die is when they cost Montanans money."

Unbuckled vehicle occupants in crashes spend an average 2.3 days longer in the hospital than do belted occupants and rack up almost \$17,000 more in medical bills, according to the Harborview study.

"Belted passengers still get in crashes, but they don't get injured as often," said Dr. Dennis Maier, medical director for the St. Vincent Healthcare trauma department. "When they do get injured, it's not nearly as severe."

About 58 percent of vehicle occupants who need hospitalization after a crash were unbelted. More than 70 percent of people killed in crashes in Montana were riding or driving unbuckled.

"I believe each of us has a personal responsibility for ourselves and for others," said Rep. Ken Peterson, R-Billings, who supports a seat belt law. "If we don't take that personal responsibility, then the government has to interject itself."

A seat belt law is one of two children's health issues the Montana Council for Maternal and Child Health will lobby lawmakers to support during the 2009 session, said the group's Steve Yeakel.

Also on the agenda is securing funding for Initiative 155, a voter-approved initiative that would expand health insurance to 30,000 Montana children.

I-155 could be funded with up to \$22 million that is already collected annually by taxing health insurance premiums, Yeakel said.

"It's going to close the gap and insure so many kids who currently don't have insurance," said Virginia Summey, an assistant in the state auditor's office. "It'll get them preventive care and prevent visits to the emergency room."

Contact Diane Cochran at [dcochran@billingsgazette.com](mailto:dcochran@billingsgazette.com) or 657-1287.

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ALWAYS ON

## Not wearing seat belts causing increased MT healthcare costs

Posted: Dec 11, 2008 06:35 PM MST

Updated: Dec 18, 2008 05:59 PM MST

Everyday, a majority of Montanans get in their cars and go to work, school or around town.

But a small percentage of drivers don't buckle up and when they get in accidents, it can mean tragedy for them and big bucks for taxpayers.

"If we increase seat belt usage in Montana by at least 10 percent, we will save the state at least \$7 million in Medicare costs," said Denice Harris, AAA Montana Spokeswoman and a member of the Montana Seatbelt Coalition.

Nearly 900 unbelted people are hospitalized each year in Montana, according to a study by Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center. Of those, 819 could have avoided hospitalization if they had used a seatbelt.

Health care costs are not cheap.

36% of people who don't wear seatbelts have no health insurance. The state pays those costs and that means each taxpayer pays an estimated additional \$51.

"Those people that are dying are actually cheap as far as what they cost the people of Montana. It's the people who don't die and those are the ones that are ejected, the vehicle rolls over them," Harris said.

"They don't die and they sustain massive injuries that send them into rehabilitation. All this care and that's really what's costing us," he added.

The Montana Seatbelt Coalition is trying to raise awareness to the tolls of not wearing a seat belt by encouraging the legislature to pass a primary seatbelt law.

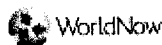
Right now, law enforcement authorities cannot pull over a motorist simply for not wearing seatbelt. That would change if the coalition is successful.

But seatbelt legislation has had some problems being passed in previous sessions.

"I supported it in the judiciary committee last time and we got it out of the judiciary committee and got it on the floor of the House for a vote, but it failed on the floor," said Ken Peterson, a Republican in the Montana House Representative for Billings.

Some Montanans don't believe the government should tell them whether to wear seatbelts, but if the coalition has its way, a primary seatbelt law could soon be the rule of the road.

**- Amanda Venegas reporting for Q2 in Billings.**



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## The morning she didn't wear her seatbelt

Wednesday, 26 November 2008

By Adele Stenson, MSU Extension Pondera County

Have you ever gotten a phone call in the middle of the night, and your adrenaline instantly begins to pump? There's just something about a call at a late hour that makes you think something very bad has happened.

When I got a call at a few minutes before 8 a.m. in the morning a few weeks ago, I wasn't prepared for the devastating news that my daughter had been in a vehicle roll-over on her way back to town after picking up a friend before school.

After that, the initial shock was to see her in the Emergency Room, so very hurt, and to listen to the doctors tell me she had a collapsed lung, among other internal injuries. Nobody should have to watch a chest tube be inserted into his or her child. On the other hand, I was grateful that she was alive and that her passenger was okay.

The second shock was to learn that my kid, who always wears her seatbelt, (even her friends say so!) wasn't that morning.

We would find out later from the highway patrolman on the scene that the car rolled over her when she was partially ejected out her window, causing a severely broken collarbone, a broken second rib, a collapsed lung, and lacerated spleen, in addition to being beat up in general.

The inside of her car is intact, if only she'd been buckled inside of it.

Her passenger was buckled, and he ended up with a concussion and stitches. He was also very sore on his left side &ndash; presumably from where she flew into him during the rollover. He was back in school the following week while she remained in the hospital.

The thing that plagues both of these young people, more than physical pain they suffered, is the "what ifs." My daughter is haunted by the knowledge that had her buddy not chosen to wear his seat belt, he could have been in the ICU too or worse, and she would have felt responsible for it. For her friend's part, he still can't escape the image of her hanging out the car window unconscious and his first thought that she was dead.

As parents, even though our girl is home and will recover completely, we can't shake the reality that the one time in 50 that our daughter didn't buckle up, almost took her life. Nor the reality that had her passenger not buckled up, that whole wreck could have been so much more devastating.

From looking at her vehicle, a person would think the inside of the car would be in bad shape, but the car performed just as it was supposed to &ndash; the outside of the vehicle crumpled, and the safety cage held up to protect its occupants. The law enforcement officers at the scene are certain that she would have suffered far less traumatic injuries had she been belted, as her passenger was.

A seatbelt doesn't guarantee you won't die or be seriously injured in a crash, but it greatly increases your chances of survival without devastating injuries. The statistics show it:

You are four times more likely to die in a crash if you are thrown out of the vehicle.

You are 14 times more likely to sustain a spinal cord injury if ejected from the vehicle.

Seventy-three percent of the Montana crash fatalities in the past five years were people not wearing seat belts. People who might be alive today if they had been.

Another 1,000 people are in vehicle crashes each year in Montana whose injuries are categorized as "incapacitating."

Additionally, a person who is not seat-belted can cause serious injury or even death to other occupants, even if those occupants are seat-belted.

So, we've established that a seatbelt is your friend in a rollover, but many people think a seat belt really isn't needed when driving in town or just a few miles down the road. Let's do the math and see what a seatbelt does for you in a head-on collision:

First of all, everything keeps moving at pre-crash speed after the vehicle stops, which means that without restraints, you and your occupants are going to impact the interior of your vehicle at that speed. But it's not just the traveling speed &ndash; it is your weight times the speed of the vehicle.

So, if you weigh 150 pounds and you're traveling down the street at 25 mph, and you hit a stationary object &ndash; say you slide into a tree on a slick street; your impact will be at 3,750 pounds of force.

Worse yet, if an oncoming vehicle hits you, you can multiply the force of their speed into that equation.

I also encourage you to make sure that small children are restrained properly in your vehicle, or the very features meant to protect them may hurt them seriously.

While air bags can save lives, a child in the front seat can be killed by the impact of an air bag. It seems kind of mean to make them sit in the back seat, but it beats the possible alternative of losing them in an accident. Also, it's important that seat belts sit properly on the occupant.

For children, this may mean a booster seat for several years to make sure that the seat belt rides across the hips and the shoulder. The belt needs ride on those bones, allowing the body's strong skeletal structure to absorb the brunt of the impact, or it can cause severe damage to vital organs.

When my daughter is feeling guilt ridden about the accident and her choice to not wear a seatbelt on that fateful day; when she's depressed because the basketball season that she has eagerly awaited will take place while she's doing physical therapy; when her friend is sleepless because he keeps picturing her lifeless body hanging out the car window; and when her dad and I have to force ourselves to allow her to leave our sight because we came so close to losing her, our hope is that maybe her accident will inspire you and your passengers to wear your seatbelts all the time.

Our hope is that you and the people you care about will do all you can to protect yourselves.

# Not wearing seatbelt is costly crime

By JOHN HARRINGTON

*Helena Independent Record*

*September 12, 2008*

Failure to wear seatbelts is one of the costliest crimes in Montana, a consultant told a group of law enforcement officials Thursday.

Speaking at the second annual Montana Crime Prevention Conference sponsored by the Montana Board of Crime Control, Joe Colella of Maryland said Montana's taxpayers, employers and communities underwrite the cost of auto wrecks, emergency response, investigations and treatment of injured people, among other costs.

"Traffic accidents cost more in lives, injuries and money than any crime in Montana," Colella said. "You end up paying in lots of ways."

Colella closed the three-day conference by telling several dozen officers and other officials from across the state that a three-pronged approach is needed to increase the use of seatbelts — legislation, education and enforcement, he said.

He noted that of 217 people who died in autos in Montana in 2007, nearly three-quarters were not buckled in. That percentage stays fairly steady over time, in 751 of the 1,063 fatalities over the last five years the victims were not wearing seatbelts.

Colella noted that Montana is a "secondary enforcement" state when it comes to seatbelt use, meaning that officers can't stop a driver simply if the driver is seen without a seatbelt. He said states with secondary enforcement have a fatality rate that's 23 percent above those states with primary enforcement, and that seatbelt use is 12 percent higher in primary states.

He also pointed out that Montana is the only state in the country that doesn't have primary enforcement of child restraint laws, meaning a police officer can't pull over a parent if he sees an unbuckled 3-year-old.

"The law coverage in Montana isn't good enough," he said.

Colella, who took up the cause when his 3-year-old niece was killed in a car wreck in 1994, said that stricter seatbelt laws have met resistance in the last couple of legislative sessions.

"The people who don't want the laws are loud, and they call their legislators and complain," he said. "The people who want the laws don't call."

The 18-member Board of Crime Control, appointed by the governor, works with law enforcement agencies of all levels across the state. Among other things, the board administers grants for various crime prevention programs, according to Mark Thatcher, the board's public safety bureau chief.

Thatcher said officers, educators, faith-based professionals and individuals all attended the conference.

"We're starting to build regional crime prevention strategies and engage communities to take control," he said. "What we're trying to do is focus on workshops and training that give people the tools they need to go out into communities and start to address those needs."

Reporter John Harrington: 447-4080 or [john.harrington@helenair.com](mailto:john.harrington@helenair.com)

# MONTANA SEAT BELT COALITION

## A Practical Guide to Changing Minds and Saving Lives

### What is Lobbying

Lobbying is an effort on the part of an individual or group to influence the passage or defeat of a legislative proposal. There are two forms of lobbying: direct and grassroots. Direct lobbying is any attempt to influence local, state, federal legislation by directly contacting any member of a legislature, legislative staff, or government employee to persuade him or her to support or defeat proposed legislation. Grassroot lobbying is any attempt to influence public opinion and motivating the public to persuade legislators to support or defeat proposed legislation. Lobbying (direct or grassroots) is not allowed by employees of state government or programs that are funded by State and/or Federal dollars.

### What is NOT Lobbying

The rules governing State and Federal lobbying efforts are intended to guide, not stop your public policy activities. You can participate during work hours in the legislative process without jeopardizing your status as a state employee or your state/federally funded program by:

1. Providing detailed analysis of the facts underlying a particular topic with the goal of helping the general public form an independent opinion about the topic.
2. Distributing information to the public that expresses a view about specific legislation, but requests no call for action.
3. Providing education and distributing printed materials that describe lobbying and the legislative process in general, as long as you do not focus on specific legislation.
4. Testifying or providing technical advice and assistance to a committee or subcommittee as long as the request is in writing from a committee or legislative body and not an individual member of the body. This technical assistance may include your opinions and recommendations about the legislation because it is available to all members of the body.
5. Communicating with government officials for purposes other than influencing legislation, such as commenting on regulations.
6. Providing technical and factual information to a legislative body, legislator, or employee of a legislator on a topic directly related to the performance of your grant or contract in response to a documented request.
7. Advocating broad social issues that are not tied to specific legislation.

*If you decide to lobby on your own time (off work time for those programs that are state / federally funded), do not identify yourself as acting, writing, or speaking on behalf of your program, do not use program letterheads or resources to communicate your messages, do not prepare material during paid work time, and do not email or call during paid work time.*

## MONTANA SEAT BELT COALITION

### A Practical Guide to Changing Minds and Saving Lives

#### Learn about your local decision makers

- Find out which legislative districts are located in your service area or county.  
Legislative Districts link: (GET the direct link and post here)
- Find out who your current legislator(s) is/are.  
Link to 2009 senators (link here)  
Link to 2009 representative (link here)
- Find the voting record of returning local legislators on seat belt issues.  
Link to MT Seat Belt Coalition

#### Make the Most of Your Message

- Know the facts and key communication points. Review the material included in this tool kit or go to [www.seatbeltmontana.com](http://www.seatbeltmontana.com).
- Discuss the (MT Seat Belt FACT Sheet and Financial Research info) and leave a copy with the individuals / groups you visit.
- Participate in public meetings and event that feature your state and local leaders.
- You may want to include other community leaders (Commissioners, judges, law enforcement) to share your message with and encourage them to talk with others.
- Stay on message. Focus your conversation on the need to protect the lives of all Montanans by increasing seat belt use and reducing the alarming state healthcare costs for unrestrained crashes.
- Remember the work of the MT Seat Belt Coalition is about public protection and education. Encourage support for public health objectives.

#### Educating Local Legislators & Community Leaders

- Establishing face-to-face contact with elected officials is one of the most effective methods to influence public policy.
- Research the legislator. Find out about his/her background, voting record, and interests.
- Be prepared to provide the following information:
  - Highlights of main points
  - Information supporting your discussion and the solutions proposed
  - Copies of supporting documentation
  - List of supporters
  - How their support will impacts your community
- If you are asked a question you do not know the answer to, be honest and tell them you do not have the answer, but will try to obtain it and get back to him/her. Contact the MT Seat Belt Coalition to assist you. Make sure to follow-up with that individual after you've gotten the answer.
- Invite your legislator or his/her aide to ride along with your ambulance /fire engines, law enforcement officer, or visit your hospital to gain a broader perspective on injury prevention.



# **MONTANA SEAT BELT COALITION**

## **A Practical Guide to Changing Minds and Saving Lives**

### **Methods for Making Contact:**

#### **Office Visit**

- Schedule a time to visit. If the legislator is unavailable, attempt to meet with his/her staffing aide. A majority of the information legislators rely on come from their staff.
- Call or email a day in advance to confirm your meeting time.
- Bring copies of handouts to leave behind.
- Within three days of your meeting, send the legislator a letter summarizing your discussion, reiterating your points, and thanking him/her for taking time to meet with you.

#### **Letters**

- Address to "The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_".
- Explain your position on a current proposal, who supports your position, and how the proposal will affect your community.
- Include the name of the proposal under consideration.
- Establish your credibility on the issue by letter the legislator know your expertise and experience.
- Close the letter by reiterating your points and thanking the legislator for his/her time.
- Keep your letter brief, no longer than one single-spaced page.
- Include any supporting documentation, newspaper clippings from your local paper.

#### **E-Mail**

- Email is the most convenient method for communicating with legislators. Use the guidelines for writing letters in your email communication.
- Include as attachments to your email message any supporting documentation as provided in this toolkit. You will need to download and save the forms you wish to attach in your personal folders. Go to (link) to download all materials included in this toolkit.

To email your legislator, go to (link to legislators)

#### **Telephone Calls**

- Phone calls are another quick way to communicate to your legislators.
- Request to speak to your representative. If he/she is unavailable, request to speak to his/her staffing aide.
- Keep your call brief and to the point.
- Have supporting information available to you during the call.
- Follow-up with an letter or email addressing the points discussed.
- Thank the legislator for his/her time.

## Contacting Legislators

### By Mail

A well-written letter is one of the best ways to let your legislator know your thoughts and opinions about a particular issue. Here are some tips for getting your message across effectively:

**Be brief.** Legislators have many demands on their time. They appreciate letters that are short and to the point.

**Put the message in your own words.** Form letters and petitions don't have the same impact as personal, informed opinions.

**Address your letter to a specific legislator or legislators.** Depending on your message, you may want to write to the sponsor of a bill, certain members of a committee, or your own legislators. Don't address your letter to the entire Legislature.

**Identify bills** by their number, title, and sponsor.

**Explain your position** on the bill and ask for the legislator's support or opposition.

**Give any sources of information** that you use to make your point.

**Include your name, address, and a little about who you are** (for example, where you work or what school you attend).

#### Address letters to:

Senator XXXX  
Montana Senate  
State Capitol  
PO Box 200500  
Helena, MT 59620-0500

or

Rep. XXXX  
Montana House of Representatives  
State Capitol  
PO Box 200400  
Helena, MT 59620-0400

### By Telephone

**During sessions:** Call the Session Information Desk at (406) 444-4800 to leave a message for as many as five legislators per call. Your message will be delivered directly to the legislators.

**Between sessions:** Call legislators directly using the telephone numbers provided in legislative rosters and in published legislative guides.

### By E-mail

**During sessions:** You may use this [e-mail form](#), or use the e-mail addresses printed with the legislative rosters and provided in published legislative guides.

**Between sessions:** You may use the e-mail addresses provided with the legislative rosters and published in legislative guides.

<http://www.leg.mt.gov/css/About%20the%20Legislature/Lawmaking%20Process/contact%20legislators.asp>

Date

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
Montana Senate  
State Capitol  
PO Box 200500  
Helena, MT 59620-0500

or

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
Montana House of Representatives  
State Capitol  
PO Box 200400  
Helena, MT 59620-0400

Subject: Thank you for voting yes to SB ### – Primary Seat Belt Law

Dear Senator/Representative \_\_\_\_\_,

I'm writing to let you know that I support Senate Bill \_\_\_\_, a bill to strengthen Montana's safety belt and child restraint laws and the enforcement of those laws. I ask that you please represent me in voting for this bill when it reaches the chamber floor.

People look to the law to guide their behavior. The secondary enforcement provision on the current seatbelt law weakens the effect and enforcement of the law. We need to change the culture around safety belt usage, and upgrading the law with SB \_\_\_\_ will help that happen quickly.

A shocking three out of four people who die on Montana's highways were not buckled. The reality is that many of those deaths could have been prevented. None of us likes seeing these statistics and what they mean in personal terms – precious loved ones taken away from our families and communities. Clearly, the "right to choose" whether to buckle up or not affects not just the individual, but Montana's taxpayers, families, and communities.

Montana needs this law to save the lives of our loved ones. Montana needs this law to save money due to the economic impact of caring for those unrestrained individuals who are critically injured. Montana needs this law to protect the babies and toddlers whose parents decided not to put them in a child safety seat or booster seat. Montana needs this law, plain and simple. It's time to end the excuses and pass SB \_\_\_\_!

Please feel free to contact me or the Montana Seatbelt Coalition ([www.seatbeltmontana.com](http://www.seatbeltmontana.com)) if you need statistical data, reports, or other information on this issue. I've attached a *Montana's Safety Belt Information Fact Sheet* for your convenience.

Thank you in advance for voting for SB \_\_\_\_.

Sincerely,

Your Name  
Your address  
Your House District/Senate District

attachment



## F. Letters of Support



### National Urban League, Inc.

The Equal Opportunity Building  
500 East 62nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10021-8379  
Telephone (212) 310-9000

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February 13, 1997

Ms. Janet Dewey  
Executive Director  
Air Bag Safety Campaign  
1019 19th Street, NW, Suite 401  
Washington, DC 20036-5105

Dear Ms. Dewey:

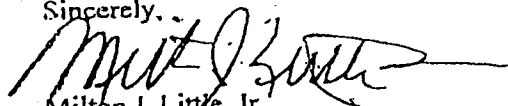
I am proud to offer this letter of endorsement from The National Urban League supporting the Air Bag Safety Campaign's important efforts to promote primary enforcement of the mandatory seat belt laws. Thank you and all those you arranged to join you for coming to meet me and discuss this important campaign.

The data is clear and compelling -- seat belts save lives and are an important means of preventing serious injuries. Yet somehow the 2 out of 3 people in cars who do not buckle up ignore these facts and continue to put themselves and their loved ones at risk. Clearly more must be done and we believe the campaign currently underway is the right approach.

We have discussed the concern some have voiced that primary enforcement may provide an opening for police harassment. While police harassment is a possible unintended consequence of the law, the data we have examined from several states reveal no reported complaints. Police harassment should be a concern to all of us and should be stopped. There are undoubtedly far more powerful and effective methods to address police harassment than opposition to primary enforcement of seat belt laws.

The National Urban League stands ready to provide any assistance we can to support your efforts.

Sincerely,

  
Milton J. Little, Jr.  
Senior Vice President  
National Policy, Research and Advocacy



THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

March 11, 1997

Speaker Casper R. Taylor, Jr.  
Maryland House of Delegates  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Speaker Taylor

I understand the Maryland House of Delegates is considering a bill that would upgrade Maryland's safety belt law to standard enforcement, HB 816, tomorrow morning. I would encourage you to support this lifesaving legislation.

Maryland's safety belt use rate for 1996 remained stagnant at 70 percent. A guaranteed method to raise safety belt use rates is to pass a standard enforcement law. States which have upgraded to a standard enforcement law have demonstrated increases in belt use rates between 10-15 points. Such an increase in Maryland would save approximately 57 lives and prevent over 2,000 injuries. These lives saved and injuries prevented would translate to an economic savings of \$134 million in the state of Maryland.

There are some in your House who will no doubt oppose this legislation. Some of them will say this is a violation of their rights or an infringement on the personal freedom of motorists. In truth, it is an imposition on others' rights when society is forced to pay more money in health costs for people who are unrestrained. A 1996 report to Congress by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration found that the average inpatient charge for unbelted passenger vehicle drivers admitted to an inpatient facility as a result of a crash injury was more than 55 percent greater than the average charge for those who were belted.

It is also worth noting that Maryland already has a safety belt law in effect, but there is still a 30 percent non-compliance rate in Maryland. This bill would do nothing more to infringe on a person's personal freedom than is already in statute. The only difference HB 816 would provide is that it will provide police officers an opportunity to enforce that law.

There are also some who may be concerned that police will use this as a tool to harass motorists. Police harassment of any kind cannot be tolerated and should be handled in an appropriate manner. However, in the 11 states that currently have standard enforcement laws, there has not been any evidence that police will use this law as a tool to harass motorists. The fact of the matter is that there are already a number of reasons an officer can pull over a motorist. That is why the National Urban League and Willie Brown, Mayor of San Francisco and former Speaker of the California Assembly, support standard enforcement of safety belts.

The members of your chamber have a historic opportunity to save lives in Maryland. I urge you to pass HB 816,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Rodney E. Slater', is written over a horizontal line.

Rodney E. Slater



## **Exhibit 1**

**This exhibit is a DVD  
entitled:  
Room to Live**

**This exhibit is a 3-D item  
which can not be scanned,  
therefore only the front  
of the DVD has been  
scanned to aid in your  
research.**

**The original exhibits are  
on file at the Montana  
Historical Society and  
may be viewed there.**

**Montana Historical Society  
Archives  
225 N. Roberts  
Helena MT 59620-1201  
Phone (406) 444-4774  
2009 Legislative Scanner Susie Hamilton**

STATE ADMINISTRATION

Exhibit No. 1  
Date 1/27/09  
Bill No. SB 237

